THE CHURCH MONTHLY

Volume 4 SEPTEMBER, 1930 *Number* 11

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THE RIVERSIDE CHURCH

Cornerstone laid November 20, 1927. First Service of Worship will be held October 5, 1930.

THE CHURCH MONTHLY

Volume 4 SEPTEMBER, 1930 *Number* 11

A Pastoral Letter

To the Members of the Riverside Church:—

Dear Friends:

As we face another active and unpredictable church year, I welcome the opportunity which this letter affords to share with you some of the problems and tasks involved in those aspects of our work which are most directly my responsibility as one of your ministers and to suggest a few ways in which you can be of service. First, however, let me express my deep appreciation of the understanding and readiness to help which were evidenced upon all sides during the past year. In a period of transition, requiring so many and such radical re-adjustments, it would have been easy to have been critical or to have adopted an attitude of watchful waiting. With the experience of the past year vividly in mind, I look forward to the work of this fall with a new sense of being your minister and with confidence in your personal interest and support.

"No people not itself religious can give its children a religious education." These words of a noted rabbi, addressed to a conference on religious education, impress me more and more with the passing of the years. They are as true when applied to churches and homes as they are when used of peoples. Only a group that is a creatively Christian community can provide Christian education except in a very limited way. The most important single factor in our educational program is the character of Riverside Church. This is determined by the dominant interests and the living faith of its members and it is reflected in the methods by which we work, the size and proportions of our budgets, our attitudes towards groups within and without the church and the significance for Christian living and for a Christian world of the activities in which we are engaged. It is educative in a sense that is far-reaching and pervasive beyond any direct teaching. Consciously or unconsciously we are all making our contribution toward the character of the church and upon it the possibility of a program of Christian education here depends.

When we speak of our educational program, we think inclusively of the rapidly increasing number of more selective and intimate groups in which the life of our church finds stimulus and expression—those which are organized under the auspices of the Men's and Women's Bible Classes, the Guild, Parents' Classes, Lenten Classes, Students' Luncheon Groups, etc., quite as much as those which have been traditionally organized under the title Bible, Sunday or Church School. Christian education depends upon fellowship with men and women who are walking, according to the grace given to each of them, with and in the way of Christ—loving, working, thinking and worshipping together. As a rule, we enter into this experience through the active participation and friendships possible only in smaller groups. If, however, these groups are thought of, organized and conducted as institutions quite independent of the church, the life of these groups and probably the life of the church as a whole is bound to lose some of its possible vitality and significance. To continue to think in terms of contrasts such as education versus worship, Church versus Church School, mid-week versus Sunday activities is to be blind to the deeper significance of our task and our exceptional opportunity.

Our educational program has grown somewhat like Topsy and many of our members would be surprised to see what it looks like today. There is now available an eight-page pamphlet describing the educational opportunities offered in our church for the coming year. Not everyone will want to join any of the groups or share in any of the activities described. Nevertheless, it would help immeasurably in providing a program of Christian education in our church if every member were to become familiar with this aspect of our church life and to feel it his as he feels that Doctor Fosdick is his minister and our new building his church.

Success is dangerous. Its danger lies largely in the fact that it is measured in such obvious and limited terms. Our church is a success: its educational activities are successes. There was a thrill just in being around and in things last year: there were so many people, groups and programs sprang up like weeds, developments one would scarce dare to expect in years came about in months and there seemed no limit to what might be achieved. The problem confronting us now, upon the solution of which our more permanent and significant success depends, is that of integrating our activities and groups, directing all this life to the realization of meaningful and worthwhile purposes. Unless the activities of the various age, sex and interest groups are conceived and conducted as parts of a whole, a great deal of duplication of effort, of competition for the attention of the same people and unjustifiable expense is bound to result. Furthermore, we are likely to be caught in a maze of activities increasing in complexity while decreasing in significance in terms both of personal growth and of the coming of the kingdom of God. This is one of the fundamental problems with which the

committee on education is wrestling. It will undoubtedly make suggestions from time to time; but it recognizes that the realization of a program of the kind we ought to have depends upon the vision of the leaders and members of the several groups, upon their ability to think things through and upon their patience in working together for remote and inclusive ends.

Every teacher and every parent who takes religious education seriously comes to realize increasingly how essential to the fulfillment of his or her responsibilities are common understanding and wholehearted co-operation between parents, homes and schools. Always there beckons the promise that they may achieve an intelligent control of the common life in which their children are growing up if they can learn to work together. As our contribution to this end our program includes two courses arranged by and for parents. Probably not all of the parents represented in our membership or by children enrolled in our classes and groups will be interested in these courses; but this fall all parents will be included in a Parents' Council. It is impossible to foresee all that may result if every parent will conscientiously read the notices of its meetings, follow its suggestions and participate in its activities as far as practicable. Further information about these courses and the Parents' Council may be found in the announcement to which reference has already been made.

There comes a time in the experience of many individuals when they become restless because of the rather passive role they play in the life of the church or because the activities and groups of which we have been thinking have ceased to awaken more than very spasmodic interest. If you are one of these, why not consider the opportunity for leadership in our educational work? Every kind of ability can be utilized—intellectual, social, dramatic, musical, artistic and executive. You will deal with the most vital problems and become acquainted with people on a personal basis which makes them all interesting. You will find new gateways into the life more abundant, discover a self which is part of the larger life which ever transcends our limited comprehension and learn to appreciate the privilege of being a disciple of Jesus, a member in the church of Christ and a fellow-worker with a creative God.

In most cases some theoretical preparation for leadership is necessary. An opportunity to secure this will be afforded by a training class of which I will be the teacher. It will meet the second and fourth Sunday mornings of each month. On the other Sundays the members of the class will observe work in our own or other churches and their observations will be the basis of reports and discussion. Those who are prepared for it will be given opportunity to teach under helpful supervision. I shall be most happy to discuss this matter of leadership and enrollment in this class with any who are interested.

It will be stupid for us not to realize that we are in sober truth "an house set on a hill." Because of the leadership of Doctor Fosdick, the beauty of our new church and our strategic location, multitudes will visit our church, read our Church Monthly and seek to learn all they can of our activities and interests. There are more general factors which add significance to what any outstanding church today does in the field of religious education. The need for developing personal integrity, moral sensitiveness, social intelligence and creative faith adequate to the demands of our world is being clearly recognized; but there is a widespread scepticism as to the ability of the church to play any vital part in meeting the real spiritual needs either of individuals or society. Many communities have heard the demand for religious education and have sought energetically to supply it; but some of them are already realizing how much easier it is to provide building and equipment than to do anything very significant in and with them. The educational practices of the church are being critically evaluated by laymen, preachers and educators everywhere. One of the research agencies is literally combing the country to find actual illustrations of what is conceived as progressive religious education. The educational work of our church will inevitably be significant far beyond our immediate community. It cannot be hid and its character must justify our almost unique privileges. God grant that we may measure up to our opportunity and our responsibility!

Sincerely yours,

Ivan Hellstrom

September, 1930.

The Mystery of Life

By Harry Emerson Fosdick

The older a man grows the more mysterious life becomes to him. We sometimes say to a youth that when he grows up he will know more, but that is true only in detail. In general, an increasing experience of life only deepens the sense of its mystery.

Professor Palmer of Harvard tells of receiving from one of his young students a manuscript with an accompanying letter in which the youth said that he intended to write several books and that this was only the first of them, saying naively, by way of introduction, "I have explained the universe." You see what it would mean to tell such a youth that when he grows up he will know more. It really means that when he grows up he will know less. He will discover, if he is wise, that life is set in a limitless sea of mystery.

Indeed, in every realm, the more we know the more the mystery grows. The popular idea that science clears up mysteries in the sense that the more science there is the less mystery is left, is a strange inversion of the fact. Modern science makes even the physical universe increasingly mysterious. Our ancient forefathers thought they lived upon a flat and stationary earth and were content with simple explanations, and here we are on a planet flying 18½ miles a second, with the nearest star off there twenty-five trillion miles. There has been an increase of knowledge, but also an increase of mystery. And when one turns from the extensive aspect of science to the intensive and tries to keep up with modern physics and chemistry, what an access of information and what an access of mystery! One picks up one of the last treatments on the new Quantum Theory of physics and the first sentence he runs upon is this: "The series of concepts which we now approach are difficult to grasp and still more difficult to explain." I should say so! Professor Jeans, in his amazing book summing up the new knowledge of the world, says that in his opinion "the ultimate realities of the universe are at present quite beyond the reach of science, and may be—and probably are— for ever beyond the comprehension of the human mind."

If that is true about the physical universe, how much more true about our human life! It is a queer business, this human adventure of ours, and the older a man grows the queerer it seems. Everything about it is strange, from birth, where a single cell has carried over on its slender bridge what an amazing weight of inherited possibility from the race behind!—that is queer!—until death, when this mysteriously compounded organism dissolves into its elements—which is queerer yet! And in between birth and death, how the loveliness of life snuggles close to its tragedy! A little child beautiful today, crippled tomorrow; great nations rising to world power and then falling like houses of sand built by children on the shore, when the tides of destiny flow in; great servants of the public good blotted out while some old roué drags on his worse than useless life; righteousness and rottenness; beautiful homes and insane asylums; glorious creative work and unemployment; the laughter of little children and three hundred burned to death in a prison—it is a queer business! And all around this human queerness on the earth that unfathomable ocean of universal mystery in which we are enisled and to which there is no end:

"And though thy soul sail leagues and leagues beyond,—
Still, leagues beyond those leagues, there is more sea."

We succeed in getting on happily most of the time without bothering about this too much. We absorb ourselves in immediate tasks. We get our academic degrees; we succeed in business; we fall in love; we take care of our children; we improve our golf score; we take life as it comes and make the best of it. We are not always vividly conscious of the abysmal mystery of life, but it is always there. It is the abiding background of life, and ever and again something happens—how inevitably something does happen—great love, great tragedy, a child's birth, a friend's death, a blind alley where a man has to stop and think, a meditative day in the country even, where imagination spreads its wings and flies. Something happens and we lift our eyes to see the mystery of life.

Now, mystery is dangerous; it can do things to us. Remember the old maps of the sea before Columbus and Magellan! Those unsailed seas were unknown and so were peopled with nameless horrors, monstrous sea creatures. Like children frightened in the dark, man has always been afraid of the unknown. Even in a mystery play today let the stage be darkened and out of it some weird sound come, and the hair of even the intelligent will fairly stand on end. Mystery can do things to us, and mystery is doing things to many folk today. Cynicism, disillusionment, anxiety, fear,—how often the thousand and one maladies of haunted lives come from emotional reaction to the mystery of life!

If some one protests that science has illumined many areas and driven off specters of the imagination that once frightened man, I agree. Many an ancient superstition that used to terrify men has retreated before the face of light, but, for all that science has done or can do, we still face mystery. Indeed, it was a scientist who said that all our modern knowledge is like a bonfire at night; we pile on the fuel and let the flames leap high, thereby increasing the area of illumination, to be sure, but increasing also the area of darkness that the light impinges on. More light makes more mystery visible.

What is out there in the unknown, and what should be our attitude toward it?

Obviously, the first lesson to be drawn from the mysteriousness of life is distrust of dogmatism. Whenever you see anyone stand over against the mystery of life whipping off finalities as though he could settle it, distrust that man. Indeed, let us make our distrust of dogmatism comprehensive so that it includes both the dogmatic religionist and dogmatic irreligionist. Today in intelligent circles the dogmatic religionist is fairly well outlawed. He is laughed at for his pains. Listen, for example, to a recent exhibition of an obsolete attitude and see how ridiculous it is. Let us take it from our own church family, lest we be suspected of laughing at someone else. Says a narrowly sectarian paper: "Baptists have the whole truth. Nobody else has. West Kentucky Baptists come nearer standing for the whole truth and all the truth than any other set of Baptists in this round world." Ah, you West Kentucky Baptists, how the world has waited for you! Even East Kentucky Baptists, marvelous as they are, have never discovered the truth of life as you have! No! In all intelligent circles the day of that kind of thing in religion is going.

But, strangely enough, the day of that kind of thing in irreligion seems to be coming. Visiting a college campus sometime ago I found the students in reaction against dogmatism in matters of religion. Ah! you say, just so; you cannot force religion dogmatically upon this younger generation. But, my friends, on that campus the shoe was on the other foot altogether. Those students were not reacting against a dogmatism that favored religion; they were reacting against a dogmatism that scorned religion. On that campus, long since, the department of religion had learned its les-

son. It was intelligent; it was not dogmatic. There were, however, other chairs where little men were whipping out final solutions of the eternal mystery. No God —by no possibility anything like God! Mechanism—that was the magic secret which unsnarled all tangles and solved all mysteries. Human life upon this planet was an affair of chance! The heat happened to be just right at one stage of the planet's cooling and so life came, and out of life personality, and out of personality some amazing things, to be sure, but no God, nothing like God!

My friends, when we say today, Distrust dogmatism, we must mean in particular that kind of dogmatism, for in so-called intelligent circles it is much more common than religious dogmatism is. The spirit of the West Kentucky Baptists is not confined to West Kentucky. And, strangely enough, it particularly emerges in the field of irreligion.

There is one motto, on which great men of science and great men of faith would agree, that might well be hung upon the wall of every church and of every college classroom: "The more we know about the universe, the more mysterious it is."

Now, this acknowledgment that our life is surrounded by mystery disturbs some religious people. Indeed some one here this morning may be saying: This does not sound like the Bible; the Bible speaks with confidence, certainty, finality; give us the Bible! Very well! Listen! "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven; what canst thou do? Deeper than Sheol; what canst thou know?"—that is the Bible. "Righteous art thou, O Jehovah, when I contend with thee; yet would I reason the cause with thee: wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they at ease that deal very treacherously?" — that is the Bible. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—that is the Bible. "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out!"—that is the Bible. "At present we only see the baffling reflections in a mirror"—that is the Bible.

Indeed, we may well take that last for our text. It comes from Dr. Moffatt's translation of the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. The old version said: "Now we see through a glass, darkly," but this is much nearer to the original: "At present we only see the baffling reflections in a mirror."

That is true. Life is full of mystery and we had better be thankful. Suppose there were no mystery. That would mean that you and I could comprehend the universe completely: but that, in turn, would mean that the universe was so thin and small that it could be comprehended by little minds like ours. Thank heaven, that is not true! The universe is far too marvelous for that. It is high; it is deep; our minds, developing for a few millenia upon this planet, cannot grasp it. It is not so pitifully small that we can understand it—let us be grateful for that! I would rather live in a world where my life is surrounded by mystery than live in a world so small that my mind could comprehend it.

That is the first thing to say: Distrust dogmatism and be grateful that this universe is not so shallow that our little plummets can touch bottom.

The second thing to say is this: Wherever a mystery has been cleared up, the truth has turned out to be more marvelous than anybody had dared to dream—mark it! *more* marvelous, not less. The flat and stationary earth on which our ancestors thought they lived presented a mystery: what did it rest on? Some people said that it rested on an elephant and that the elephant stood on a turtle, and then their imaginations ran out. One old Hebrew poet, who wrote the Book of Job, said: "He . . . hangeth the earth upon nothing." That was a leap of insight, and yet a flat and stationary earth that rests on nothing is a mystery. Now, that mystery has been cleared up and the truth that cleared it up

turned out to be so marvelous, beyond anything that man had dared to dream, that it took many a year before mankind could believe it—the earth not flat, round; not stationary, traveling six hundred million miles a year around the sun, and the whole solar system but an item in an immeasurable cosmos held together by gravitation. You see, wherever a mystery has been cleared up, the truth has proved to be more marvelous than folk had dared to think.

Fossils used to be a mystery. Those strange stone bugs and things in the strata of the earth—how did they get there? Some even said that God had deliberately put them there to perplex man's mind and test his faith. Well, the mystery of fossils has been cleared up and the truth that cleared it up, the long leisureliness of creation, slowly laying the foundations of the earth, and the million year story of life's evolution, is so marvelous that some folk yet cannot believe it. This has always been so: whenever a mystery has been cleared up the truth lay, not on this side of our imaginations but far beyond. This world always turns out to be more wonderful than any one had thought.

That is one basic reason why some of us approach the mystery of life with positiveness and triumph. To take a negative and timid attitude toward the unknown in a world where the unknown, when it is cleared up, has always turned out to be more marvelous than we had dreamed—that is irrational.

In my youth I studied the old physics. Now we have Einstein and Eddington. My word! this world *is* more marvelous than we had thought. Some of our children come home talking familiarly about the fourth dimension. Undoubtedly it is here. We live in three dimensions only, but there is a fourth dimension. What unimaginable richness there is beyond our grasp! Our ears tune in on a narrow scale of sound. What endless sound waves there must be above and below! Our eyes tune in on a small spectrum of color. What ranges of vision there must be unguessed by us! Always the mystery has turned out to be filled, not by ghosts and hobgoblins, but by marvels.

Can we really think of the spiritual life of man as the solitary exception to this rule? My friends, this universe is more spiritually significant than any of us have ever dared to think—I stake my faith on that!

Indeed, it is not even a matter of what we ordinarily call faith. For consider: whenever a mystery has been cleared up, there always has been an adequate explanation. Facts are never left high and dry in the air without an adequate explanation when any mystery is cleared up. When perturbations appeared in the orbit of the Planet Uranus off there astronomers said there must be an explanation for these perturbations. No explanation was in sight. They said there must be an explanation and they guessed another planet whose location they figured out. But no such planet was yet known. Then they searched both the sky and their star maps more carefully and discovered it—the Planet Neptune. Whenever a mystery is cleared up there is always an adequate explanation. That is the kind of universe we live in.

Do you really mean that man's spiritual life is the only exception? Personality with all its possibilities and its achievements a fortuitous emergence because the heat happened to be right at one stage of the planet's cooling? Nonsense! my friends; that is not dealing seriously with the law of adequate causation. There are facts here, prodigious facts that cannot be brushed aside like that: Personality, the most amazing fact in the universe, self-conscious being with powers of memory and reflection, intelligence, purposefulness and love; spiritual life, glorious spiritual life in Christ-like souls, where beauty and truth have flowered out into bloom and fragrance; progress from some stone age to hopes of international goodwill and brotherhood; cre-

ative power to produce beauty, discover truth, achieve goodness—prodigious facts. And there is an explanation. Unless this universe is crazy, and it never yet has turned out to be crazy, there is an explanation. Moreover, there is an adequate explanation.

For one, therefore, I go out into this mysterious life with a song. There is an explanation. The mystery is one of light and not of darkness. I know the explanation only in bits. "At present we only see the baffling reflections in a mirror," but there is an explanation. For this strange human life with its hopes and tragedies, for this vast cosmos, the queer home of our adventure, there is an explanation.

If you say our ideas of God as the explanation are inadequate, we know that. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" The trouble is that our ideas are so far short of the reality. The truth is much more marvelous than we have dared to think. That is the second thing to say: that the mystery of life is not full of fear but of marvel and that this universe is more spiritually significant than we have yet imagined.

The third thing to say is that in the meantime there is light enough to live by. Aye! Though we are often baffled and perplexed so that like Wordsworth we go off to some Tintern Abbey feeling the "burthen of the mystery" and "the heavy and the weary weight of all this unintelligible world," when we come to our best hours and pull ourselves together, there is light enough to live by,—decently with ourselves, kindly with our neighbors, courageously in our troubles,—light enough to be at least a little radiant within and, without, to help build a fairer social order where personality may flourish.

Indeed, remember that our text comes from the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Has it ever occurred to anybody that that chapter sounds baffled and perplexed? Upon the contrary, it is a triumphant song about those abiding values that a man can depend on and live by gloriously: faith, and hope, and love. Yet, at the heart of that chapter you will find everything we have been talking about this morning. Paul says that our vaunted knowledge will disappear, that now we know in part and prophesy in part, and that when full knowledge comes our knowledge will vanish away. Paul says that sometime we shall see face to face but now we see only the baffling reflections in a mirror. Like all large minds, Paul felt the mystery of life, but he found something else here too: light, glorious light to live by—"Now abideth faith, hope, love."

Our morning's thought would be alike incomplete and unchristian without this truth. What is it that our religion does for us anyway? Does it clear up the mysteries? Of course not. More harm has been done than wise work will undo for many a year by these preachers who have pretended to clear up the mystery of life. Think of a preacher proposing to clear up the intellectual and moral perplexities of a cosmos like this! Think of a preacher tackling the problem of a world where little children are born defective, where whole races, like the Aztecs, rise and fall and pass away and leave hardly a memory behind, where human life is battered by unequal and cruel circumstance, where today if you are born in India you have an average chance of living twenty-two years and if you are born in the United States you have an average chance of living fifty-nine years; tackling a cosmos where the loveliest life was crucified, to clear up the mystery! No, our religion does not clear up the mystery nor give us a formula to answer all questions. Upon the contrary, at the heart of our religion is the deepest mystery of all, the Cross, where love was nailed to a tree by hate. But what our religion does do is to give us a kind of life, and power withal to sustain it, that can be lived joyously, triumphantly, in the midst of the mystery. It gives us light

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Prayer

by Harry Emerson Fosdick

Eternal spirit, high over all, blessed forever, Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns, the round ocean, the living air, the blue sky, and in the mind of man, we worship Thee. In Thee we live and move and have our being, yet we apprehend Thee not. Thou art closer to us than breathing and nearer than hands and feet, and yet we understand Thee not. Thou speakest unto us in all the goodness, beauty, and truth we know and yet we debate Thy being as though birds should argue the air they live in. O God, be not thus vague to us. Make Thyself real. Unveil our eyes. Make sensitive our hearts that we may feel. Challenge us in conscience. Allure us in ideals. Speak to us through minds that see the orderliness of Thy universe and hearts that love goodness, and grant that this day we may have an answer to our prayer: Lord, we believe; help Thou our unbelief.

Make the divine life real, we beseech Thee, in our homes. Blessed be God Who settest the solitary in families! For benedictions that have streamed upon us from fathers and mothers who loved us better than themselves we thank Thee. We, whose sires built the dikes of the family against the encroaching seas of pagan uncleanness, pray unto Thee. Let not the Christian home fall in our time! Amid the perils of the family life grant us homes built with solidity and purity, happiness and peace. And may our children rise up to call us blessed.

Make the divine life real in our churches. So long ago at Pentecost Thy power came down upon a discouraged band of Thy disciples, who went out to overthrow the world. Let not their work fail in our hands! Baptize us once more with the Spirit. We have grown prosperous; we have built great institutions; we have achieved worldly power. We are not despised and rejected of men. We are tempted to pride. Let not Pentecost fail within us! Renew the inner Spirit of the Christ in Thy Church, O God; his humility, his meekness, his generosity and goodwill, his boundless care for all personalities, his freedom from narrow prejudice, the breadth and magnanimity of his inclusive spirit, that Thy church may be worthy of his name.

Make the divine life real, we beseech Thee, in our societies. We repent before Thee, O God, with sadness of heart. We repent for the cruelty of mobs who burn and slay without justice and without mercy. We repent before Thee the unemployed who walk our streets and the poverty that lurks in the deep shadows of our bright prosperities. We repent before Thee all wars and rumors of war, where men forget nothing of ancient hatreds and learn nothing concerning the evils of mutual slaughter. Yet beneath all the wrong that bows down our hearts with shame and penitence, we see the forward movement of Thy purpose through the ages. Clothe our hearts with a new courage. Strengthen our wills with a new determination. Lure us with a fresh vision of the ideals of brotherhood. Send us forth to make the divine real in our societies.

Make the divine real in our private lives. O God, out of what varied circumstance we come to worship Thee Thy

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THE MYSTERY OF LIFE

(*Continued from Page 215*)

enough to walk by: faith, and hope, and love.

That is why we Christians so rejoice that the center of our religious life is not a proposition but a person. Propositions to clear up the mystery are of all things most temporary. But a person who faced all the bafflements that you and I face, hated, deserted, crucified even, a person who was not saved anything that makes life often seem to us perplexed and cruel, and yet who through it all and above it all lived victoriously and even when the final mystery was closing in upon him said: "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full," a life like that throws such illumination on our path that we have done well to call him "the light of the world."

Now you and I are going out from this church to our work again. Somehow or other, mystery or no mystery, we must manage to carry on with this business of living. How many of us here have been depleting our energies for that high task by negative reactions to the mystery of life? It is so easy for a man to think himself into the depths, by saying habitually to himself, Life is so puzzling, so bewildering, has so many baffling problems, unsolved riddles, unanswered questions; why?...why?...why? My friends, there are other souls, triumphant souls, who find life just as mysterious as you do but who have found something else. Do you remember Pompilia in Browning's Ring and the Book? She faced a mystery dark and cruel enough. But you will recall her saying about a beautiful life that had singularly blessed hers,

> "...Through such souls alone
> God stooping shows sufficient of His light
> For us i' the dark to rise by. And I rise."

That is the essence of the Gospel. We say it about Christ:

> "...Through such souls alone
> God stooping shows sufficient of His light
> For us i' the dark to rise by. And we rise."

Prayer

ETERNAL SPIRIT, help us indeed to rise by the light of Christ. Let us be chastened and humbled and solemnized by the mystery of life, but not spoiled by it. Make it to us through spiritual insight a mystery of light and not of darkness. People it for us, not with fears but with spiritual meanings and presences, and so send us forth to walk by the light we do see until we shall see face to face. Amen.

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Dr. Fosdick preached the foregoing sermon on May 4, 1930, at Temple Beth-El

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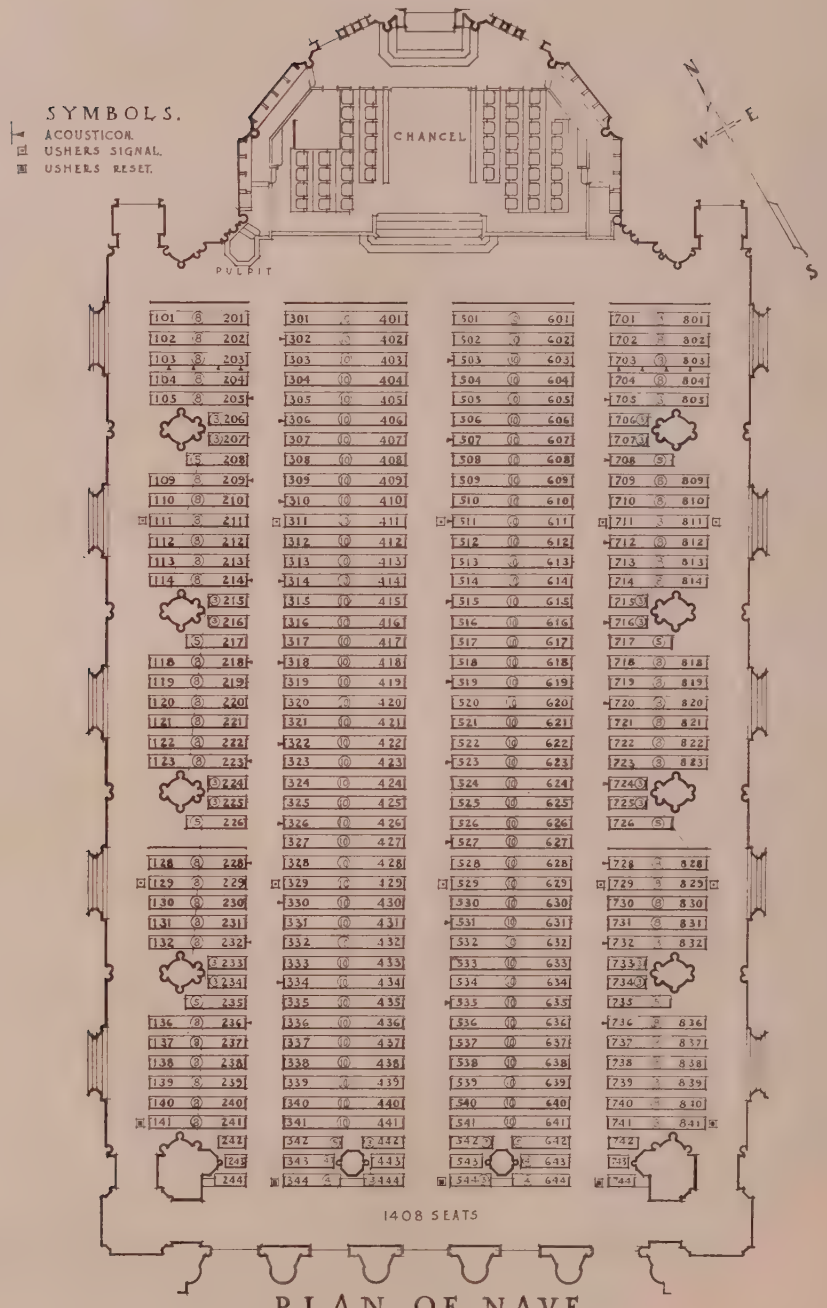
PRAYER

(*Continued from Page 216*)

searching and penetrating Spirit alone can know. For some of us are young and some are old, some of us are rich and some are poor. Upon some the benediction of unbroken family circles rests and some have lately laid their dead away and beside the grave have cried, How empty are my arms! Some are happy and some are vexed and irritated, storm-tossed, and anxious, and full of fear. O God, lift upon us all, we beseech Thee, the peace of Thy saving Spirit. Let us grow quiet in Thy Presence. Let tranquillity, serenity, and calm take the place of pride and anxiety, vexation, and fear. Let all that is worst in us sink. Let all that is best in us rise. Give us an hour when we dwell upon the heights and make new acquaintance with the loveliest we know. Make Christ real to us and because we have dwelt for an hour in his Presence may we go down wiser to solve our problems, stronger to do our duties, and lovelier to live with.

We ask it in the spirit of our Lord. Amen.



PLAN OF NAVE.
THE RIVERSIDE CHURCH

HENRY C PELTON AND ALLEN & COLLENS
ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS.

The New Seating Plan

By George J. Heidt

After a great deal of thought and discussion had gone into the study of the best way to seat our Sunday morning congregation, a plan was adopted which has since met with the enthusiastic approval of the congregation. This plan calls for an assigned section for those who for some special reason require definite seats, and a reserved section in which members of the congregation may take any seat they wish.

Only a small percent of our membership and congregation chose the definite assignment, with the result that everyone will be assured of an excellent seat from which to enjoy the service. . .

On the opposite page is a diagram showing the pew plan of the main floor of the church. Almost everyone of the 1376 seats on the main floor has a full unobstructed view of the chancel. The diagonal lines indicate the pews from which it is impossible to see the pulpit. In all they amount to less than seven per cent of the total seats. This is a much better condition than prevailed in our former Park Avenue building. All the assigned seats are on the left hand side of the church, the reserved seats are on the right hand side and half of the left hand side.

Admission to both the assigned section and the reserved section will be by the usual card of identification. We will have here at the church this fall about seventy-five men on the Board of Ushers. The members of the Board will obviously not know every one of our members and regular attendants. Not to have tickets, would throw our members into competition with the strangers who come each Sunday in such large numbers, and introduce embarrassing situations for our own people and the ushers. The Committee on Pews and Sittings bespeaks the cooperation of the congregation in being ready to present their tickets each Sunday to the ushers. Should tickets become soiled or mislaid new ones may be obtained any Sunday morning at the Narthex office.

For the further convenience of our people we are limiting the use of the doors on 122nd street to the regular members of our congregation who have cards. Those holding tickets to the assigned section will enter by the north-west door on 122nd street and those holding reserved section tickets by the north-east door on 122nd street. It is expected that strangers will make use of the principal entrance on Riverside Drive. Our members will therefore find an easier and more comfortable passage to their seats by using these entrances. These doors will be open until 10:50, the hour when all unoccupied seats are thrown open to visitors. The use of the 122nd street doors however is merely optional.

Ear phones are generously scattered over the entire main floor and are indicated on the pew plan. This means that it is not necessary for persons who need this assistance to go to the front of the church. These are available in both the assigned and the reserved sections. The congregation is urged to apply to the office in the Narthex or to an usher for equipment.

The Board of Ushers have worked out extensive plans for taking care of the seating of the congregation and have trained themselves to do this as expeditiously as possible. There will be at least six ushers in an aisle. Each will have a fixed post and an area of activity. The ushers are glad to know your preference for seats and

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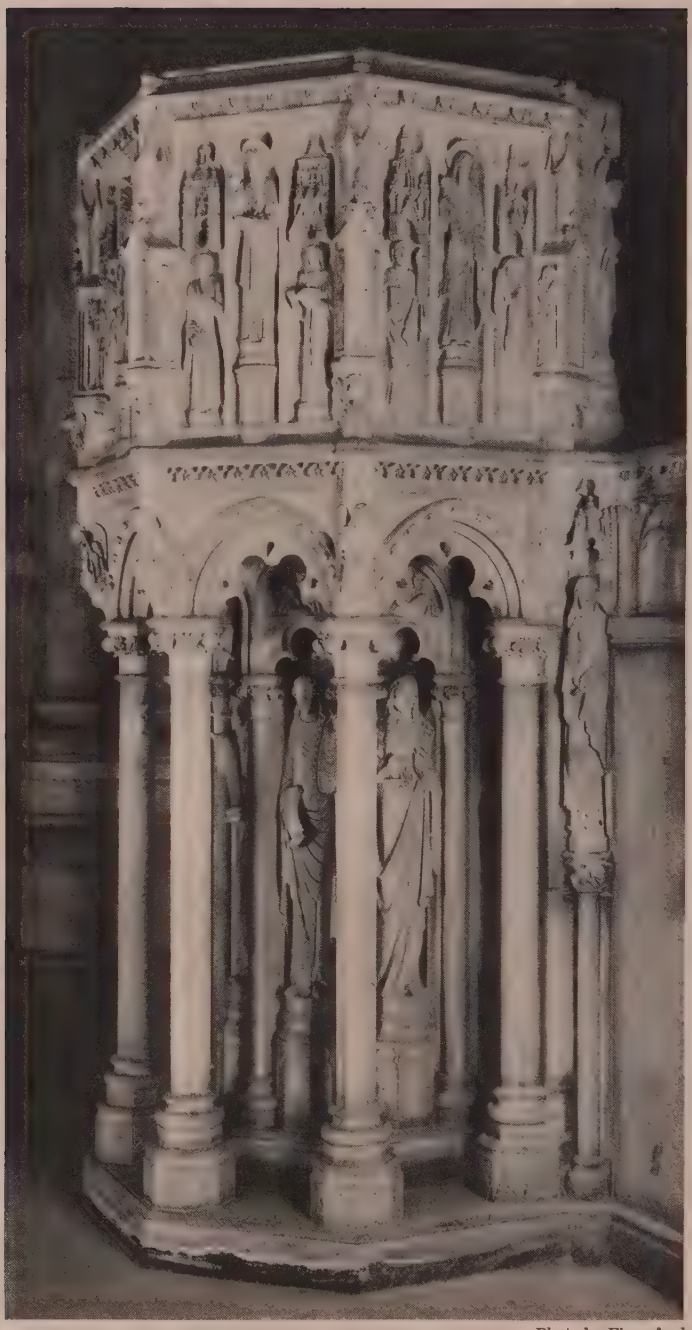

Photo by Ehrenford.

THE PULPIT

Interior Stone of the Riverside Church

By Eugene C. Carder

The Pulpit

One of the architectural features of the interior of the church which will be of greatest interest is the Pulpit of intricately carved Indiana limestone. This Pulpit springs out from the pillar at the northwest of the Nave and is so placed as to be seen from every seat in the Nave save for about three score that are behind pillars on the west aisle and the rear chairs in the west triforium gallery. Something of the craftsmanship which has been put into the creation of this prominent feature of the church may well find emphasis here. Three pieces of stone were used from which to carve the three major members. Each of these weighed three tons when it arrived at the building ready to be placed. The seemingly slender supporting member which rises from the center of the base was placed first. Upon that was set the stone which forms the actual floor of the Pulpit and which includes the delicately carved arches and caps under which the slight pillars were set later. The upper member is in fact the rail behind which the preacher will stand and it too is carved from a single stone, necessitating the reaming out of the entire inside portion of a great block. The setting of these stones has been a fascinating job to watch. Not the least interesting feature has been the untiring patience and quiet poise of the men whose task it was to see that all joints were fitted to the smallest fraction of an inch, that no smallest bit of tracery was marred, and that the work of their colleagues who had done the delicate carving should not suffer at their hands. Cooperation of a high order was manifested at this particular point, but such cooperation has been apparent throughout the building operation and in very large measure accounts for whatever of beauty and uplift is to be found in the structure.

In the decorative treatment of the Pulpit carved figures have been used. These represent the major prophets

Isaiah	Ezekiel
Jeremiah	Daniel

The minor prophets are also represented with the prophetesses

Hosea	Zephaniah
Joel	Haggai
Amos	Zechariah
Obadiah	Malachi
Jonah	Miriam
Micah	Deborah
Nahum	Hannah
Habukkuk	Anna

An interesting feature of the design of the Pulpit has been worked out in the ten canopies which adorn ten of the fifteen niches in the Pulpit rail. Variety and beauty have been achieved here in a most fascinating manner. Lovers of the cathedrals of the old world will be particularly intrigued by the device employed by the artist. Each canopy represents a characteristic architectural motif of one or another of the cathedrals chosen for this particular use. The following list gives them in the order in which they occur and indicates the particular figure which occupies each given niche:

Cathedral	
Toulouse	Nahum
Westminster Abbey	Habakkuk
Chartres	Obadiah
Coutances	Joel
Notre Dame	Jonah

THE CHANCEL RAIL—West Side of Steps

Cathedral ..... Prophet
Reims ..... Micah
Tours ..... Malachi
Bourges ..... Anna
Amiens ..... Haggai
Rouen ..... Deborah

The Chancel Rail

Of only less interest than the Pulpit itself, from the point of view of artistic treatment and symbolism, is the decorative treatment of the front of the Chancel Rail. This also is of Indiana limestone. It runs from the Pulpit on the west to the Chancel steps and from the steps to the Reading Desk on the east. The face of this rail carries twenty carved medallions, each of them quatrefoil in shape. They represent the characteristic interests, emphases, activities, rites, and ceremonies which will naturally find expression from time to time in this Chancel and in the worship and serice of this people.

With this brief introduction perhaps the mere statement of the subjects that have found expression here and a suggestion as to the source of the picture or symbol used will be a sufficient help for the imagination of the reader or the visitor. In the last analysis it is not the imaginative and creative quality of the artist, artisan, or craftsman that determines the meaning and significance of such a work but rather the qualities of mind and heart of us who look upon it. The Chancel Rail spells the following stories in symbols and pictures. Reading from the Pulpit toward the Chancel steps:

Prayer. . . . The Publican and the Pharisee
Prophesy. . . . . Isaiah the Lion and Lambs
Evangelism. . . . . Paul on Mars Hill
Ministry. . . Moses and the Commandments
Ordination. . . . . Candidate and two elders
Dedication. . . . . Parents, child and minister
Memorial. . . . . Woman at tomb with urn
Baptism. . Charlemagne, Bishop and Knight
Communion. . Christ with two apostles bread and wine
Immortality. . Christ and Mary in the Garden

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THE CHANCEL RAIL—East Side of Steps

The Mysterious Charm of Patchwork

By Margaret T. Applegarth

HOWEVER you may look at yourself and at all that you do, fundamentally you are simply—patchwork! There's that little triangular patch of your mother which everyone recognizes with amusement: perhaps she was quick and neat and silent, a hundred times a day you catch yourself being like her..... there's that square patch of your father: impulsive, humorous, tender, going out of his way to render a service—you, too! There was once a teacher you admired enormously and her method of doing this or that is tacked very securely today into your habits. Friends and neighbors and preachers have each contributed recognizable patches in your character. And it is these hand-me-downs which you are busy, day after day, in handing down to someone else as you work patiently on your section of a mammoth patchwork pattern with a name. The name is The Kingdom of God!

"My Kingdom come—on earth" we pray almost every day of our lives, but we do not always linger long enough to wonder if there were ever a bit of patchwork with a more irresistible charm in the making of it: here a patch and there a patch to which we keep devoting hours of our special skill. But is it the charm of *color* which binds us to this service? (the fitting of black against white, of yellow and brown and red into a more beautiful pattern of life, with all the racial peculiarities each such color possesses?) Or is the charm of *contrasts?* (helplessness in the old old pattern of wrinkled age and sickness, or helplessness in the ever new pattern of childhood and youth, which draws us to work in hospitals, old ladies' homes, and orphanages?) Or, is it the charm of keeping our hands and minds *busy* which makes us serve on committees and boards and societies for this-or-that organization?

In any case, on the afternoon of October twentieth the Woman's Society is planning to stop long enough to share with the women of our church the names of the particular "Patches" which each of us may have adopted as a special hobby, in a short service of dedication in the lovely new gothic chapel, after which will come an informal reception in the Women's Room in the tower.

We can think of no way of beginning the year's work with a fresher incentive than to recognize that in this great pattern of Service to Mankind each patch has its own particular beauty and necessity. Once upon a time somebody prayed: "Give me a little task to dignify my day!" What we would love to do in our meeting on October twentieth would be to dignify our tasks by dedicating each of them anew to the great Creator of the entire design.

Everyone is invited to the three o'clock service in the chapel and to the reception afterwards.

M. T. A.

(For the Woman's Society)

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SEATING PLAN

(*Continued from Page 219*)

will attempt to carry them out. The ushers ask your cooperation on one point which will aid them greatly; that our congregation take seats as far inside the pew as possible so that the center of the pews may be filled first. This cooperation will make it easier to seat our congregation quickly.

Beside the main floor of the church there are two galleries in the rear, and the Triforium galleries on either side, which are open to all without the use of tickets. These galleries seat about 1000 people and are reached by the four elevators in the Narthex.

If there are any members of the church or congregation who have not received their cards of identification, will they please write to the Committee on Pews and Seat arrangements at the church, or call the church, Monument 2900.

▽

INTERIOR STONE

(*Continued from Page 221*)

Then comes the corner guardian angel and a piece of rail extending north with a scene depicting the bondage of the law. On the east side of the steps a similar panel represents liberty and then another guardian angel. Reading from the Chancel steps to the Reading Desk, appear the following pictures:

Creation.....God and Adam
Hymnody.....Angel Trio
Marriage.....Priest and couple
Festival.....Triumphal entry
Friendship.....David and Jonathan
Patriotism..Joseph gives grain to his people
Sacrifice, Mary anointing the head of Christ
Forgiveness..Christ and the woman taken in adultery
New Testament..The Sermon on the Mount
Old Testament..The Ark of the Covenant